

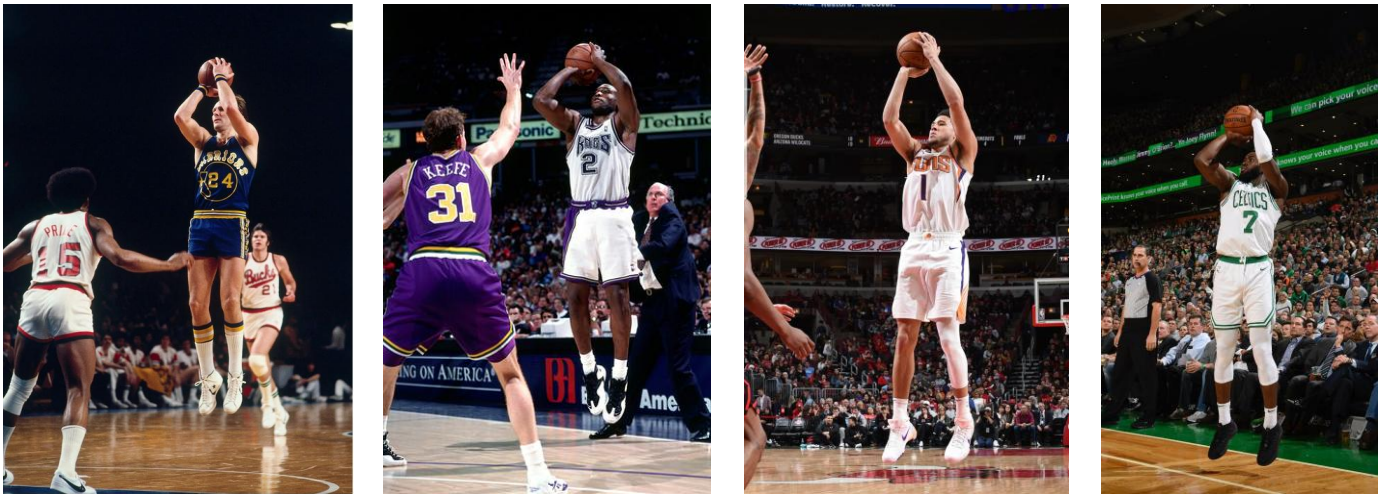
THE WHOLE-BODY ELEVATED-ELBOW-IN JUMP SHOT: SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPROVEMENT

By Robert Tilitz

The widely supported elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot is unathletic, power deficient and poorly protected. That's why players modify the elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot. One simple and successful modification raises and angles upward the elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot's out-front, horizontally extended shooting elbow so that the shooting position for the start of the release locates the shooting hand close in front of the top of the head. That small change might not seem like much, but the resulting whole-body elevated-elbow-in jump shot works much different and considerably better than the elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot.

The setup for the elevated-elbow-in shooting position requires a mini reachback. The whole-body elevated-elbow-in jump shot's mini reachback rolls the shooting shoulder back far enough to engage with the release mechanism and to activate as a source of whole-body athleticism and whole-body power. Once the setup occurs, the subsequent forward rotation of the shooting shoulder initiates the release of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot. The elevated-elbow-in jump shot's shooting-shoulder-centric release defines it as a whole-body jump shot.

The elevated-elbow-in jump shot's release can adapt to both strongside-forward and strongside-lateral dynamics, which is a neat all-in-one example of jump shot diversity. The adaptability mainly derives from the medium/midway rollback of the shooting shoulder. Going strongside forward calls for a shooting shoulder sourced straightstroke-push. Going strongside lateral calls for a shooting shoulder sourced leveraged straightstroke-pull. For Rick Barry it was usually a push. For Mitch Richmond it was usually a pull. Devin Booker and Jaylen Brown vary push and pull according to circumstance, expanding their options jump shot diversity-style.



Left to right, Rick Barry, Mitch Richmond, Devin Booker and Jaylen Brown

Jump shot diversity is a very uncommon high-level set of jump shot skills, probably the highest. Jump shot diversity usually consists of the mastery of two different but tactically complementary jump shots combining to provide multi-pronged attack capability. The elevated-elbow-in jump shot, however, provides jump shot diversity in an all-in-one jump shot package.

While medium/midway rollback of the shooting shoulder can bring jump shot diversity to the elevated-elbow-in jump shot, the less than full shooting-shoulder rollback cuts into its whole-

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body athleticism and whole-body power. It's a give and take mechanism. The elevated-elbow-in jump shot gives jump shot diversity in a single package, no setup alteration required. On the other hand, the elevated-elbow-in jump shot takes away full-fledged whole-body athleticism and whole-body power capabilities, resulting in a scaled-down version of the whole-body ideal.

The athleticism of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot benefits from its close-in-front-of-the-top-of-the-head shooting position in several ways. Locating the shooting position back within the scope of the body streamlines the shooting stance. The arm action that raises the basketball to the shooting position also helps to power the jump of the jump shot. The resulting jump encourages forceful moves and run-ups by harnessing the horizontal momentum of the move or run-up by redirecting it upward. The forward rotation of the shooting shoulder during the elevated-elbow-in jump shot's release enables strongside pull-up capability by facilitating the square-in-the-air jump that many strongside pull-up jump shots require and all could use.

The power production capability of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot starts with the forward rotation of the shooting shoulder during the release. At the same time that it partly powers the release, the forward rotation of the shooting shoulder also channels athleticism and power from the jump of the jump shot into the release. The full extension of the shooting arm and its stretched-out forearm stroke work in tandem with the forward rotation of the shooting shoulder. The brushing hand action concludes the release. The brushing hand action that controls all whole-body jump shots by fine-tuning distance and direction, generating backspin for touch, slowing velocity and adding secondary power when needed. The elevated-elbow-in jump shot gets supplementary power from the jump of the jump shot when in straight-ahead push mode and from the body-leverage sequence when in lateral pull mode.

The whole-body elevated-elbow-in jump shot is, however, less athletic and less powerful than the whole-body elbow-out and whole-body reachback jump shots because of shooting shoulder rollback and shooting shoulder forward rotation differences. Because the elevated-elbow-in medium/midway rollback results in a shorter forward rotation of the shooting shoulder during the release than the full rollbacks of the whole-body elbow-out and whole-body reachback jump shots result in, the elevated-elbow-in jump shot is less athletic and less powerful.

Protection is a plus for the elevated-elbow-in jump shot, especially by comparison to the widely recommended elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot. The elevated-elbow-in shooting position sets up close in front of the top of the head to provide decent protection. The jump of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot and the fully extended elevated-elbow-in release facilitate shooting over defenders. Square-in-the-air capability by way of shooting shoulder involvement in the release enables the body-wedge protection of the basketball during the jump of the jump shot adds a degree of attack capability to elevated-elbow-in strongside pull-ups.

The protection of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot, however, is not nearly as good as the whole-body elbow-out and whole-body reachback jump shots' protection. That's partly because the release of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot starts lower and finishes lower. There are also pre-release reasons for elevated-elbow-in protection problems. One reason is that the elbow-in aspect of the elevated-elbow-in shooting position is vulnerable to reach-ins as it is being raised during the jump of the jump shot. Another reason is that the elevated-elbow-in jump shot's

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medium/midway rollback of the shooting shoulder limits the length of the following forward rotation of the shooting shoulder during the release. That hurts protection because the forward rotation of the shooting shoulder during the release is the main power source for the square-in-the-air jump that enables body-wedge protection to the basketball as it is being raised to the shooting position during the jump of the jump shot. The whole-body elevated-elbow-in jump shot has square-in-the-air capability, but a less than maximized version of it. Body-wedge protection of the basketball during the jump of the jump shot is important at mid-range but even more important in the low-post where spacing is especially tight, which explains why the elevated-elbow-in jump shot does not dominate in low-post play.

Kevin Durant, the elevated-elbow-in jump shot's best advertisement, uses the duality of the elevated-elbow-in jump shot to achieve jump shot diversity. The results have been historic and electrifying. Durant's unparalleled combination of approximate 7-0 foot height, 6-0 foot mobility and coordination, super ballhandling and deadeye mid-range and long-range jumpshooting have produced multiple NBA individual scoring championships and multiple NBA team championships. Yet despite his height, athleticism and jumpshooting prowess, Durant to a noticeable extent has shunned post-up jumpshooting, sometimes when his team could have used it. Is that a quibble? Could be. But one thing for sure is that it does illustrate the whole-body elevated-elbow-in jump shot's post-up limitation.

One more thing for sure is that it is scary to imagine how great Durant would be if his jump shot diversity was based on mastery of the whole-body elbow-out jump shot and the whole-body reachback jump shot instead of the whole-body elevated-elbow-in jump shot. You would see Durant exploiting and imposing his height, athleticism and ballhandling to an even greater degree. You would see, more frequently than is currently the case, Durant in the low-post. You would see a 7-0 foot version of the jump shot diversity master Kyrie Irving kicking ass like it's never been kicked before, with the exception of Michael Jordan's brilliant career.



Kevin Durant, left and above